To make the programme more accessible to larger segments of the population, facilities for diagnosis by sputum microscopy have been decentralized at places near to be patients and strengthened. Drugs are provided under observation. To supplement the Government efforts in this direction, emphasis is also being given to involve medical colleges, all general hospitals, private practitioners and NGOs in the programme.

Thalassaemia Disease

*312. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that pre-marriage counselling is the only alternative to eradicate Thalassaemia disease; and

(b) if so, whether Government intend to initiate any awareness compaigns throughtout the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The pre-marriage counselling is essential to eradicate Thalassaemia.

With effect from 1.3.2000, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have taken up a research project entitled "Community Control of Thalassaemia Syndromes-Awareness, Screening, Genetic Counselling and Prevention". Under this project, in the six States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, West Bengal, Punjab and Karnataka, awareness-camps are being organized, high risk communities are being screened and genetic counselling is being provided to them.

Conversion of industrial and commercial property

*313. DR. AKHILESH DAS:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow conversion of commercial and industrial property lease into free-hold;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme indicating the rates of conversion and the criteria for fixing market value of the property; and